

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Withdrawn) A therapeutic and/or preventive agent for inner ear disorders comprising an IL-6 antagonist as an active ingredient.
2. (Withdrawn) The therapeutic and/or preventive agent according to claim 1 wherein said inner ear disorders are sensorineural hearing loss.
3. (Withdrawn) The therapeutic and/or preventive agent according to claim 2 wherein said sensorineural hearing loss is sensorineural hearing loss caused by Meniere's disease, drug-induced inner ear disorders, viral inner ear disorders, purulent inner ear disorders, temporal bone fracture or acoustic nerve tumor.
4. (Withdrawn) The therapeutic and/or preventive agent according to claim 2 wherein said sensorineural hearing loss is sudden deafness, senile deafness or noise deafness.
5. (Withdrawn) The therapeutic and/or preventive agent according to claim 1 wherein said inner ear disorders are vestibular disorders.
6. (Withdrawn) The therapeutic and/or preventive agent according to claim 5 wherein said vestibular disorders are vestibular disorders caused by Meniere's disease, vestibular neuronitis or drug-induced inner ear disorders.
7. (Withdrawn) The therapeutic and/or preventive agent according to claim 1 wherein said IL-6 antagonist is an antibody against IL-6 receptor.
8. (Withdrawn) The therapeutic and/or preventive agent according to claim 7 wherein said antibody against IL-6 receptor is a monoclonal antibody against IL-6 receptor.
9. (Withdrawn) The therapeutic and/or preventive agent according to claim 8 wherein said antibody against IL-6 receptor is a monoclonal antibody against human IL-6 receptor.

10. (Withdrawn) The therapeutic and/or preventive agent according to claim 8 wherein said antibody against IL-6 receptor is a monoclonal antibody against mouse IL-6 receptor.

11. (Withdrawn) The therapeutic and/or preventive agent according to claim 7 wherein said antibody against IL-6 receptor is a recombinant antibody.

12. (Withdrawn) The therapeutic and/or preventive agent according to claim 9 wherein said monoclonal antibody against human IL-6 receptor is PM-1 antibody.

13. (Withdrawn) The therapeutic and/or preventive agent according to claim 10 wherein said monoclonal antibody against mouse IL-6 receptor is MR16-1 antibody.

14. (Withdrawn) The therapeutic and/or preventive agent according to claim 7 wherein said antibody against IL-6 receptor is a chimeric antibody, a humanized antibody, or a human antibody against IL-6 receptor.

15. (Withdrawn) The therapeutic and/or preventive agent according to claim 14 wherein said humanized antibody against IL-6 receptor is a humanized PM-1 antibody.

16. – 30. (Cancelled)

31. (Currently Amended) A ~~therapeutic and/or preventive~~ method for treating an inner ear disorder[[s]] of a subject which comprises administering an IL-6 antagonist to the subject.

32. (Currently Amended) The ~~therapeutic and/or preventive~~ method according to claim 31 wherein said inner ear disorder[[s are]] is sensorineural hearing loss.

33. (Currently Amended) The ~~therapeutic and/or preventive~~ method according to claim 32 wherein said sensorineural hearing loss is sensorineural hearing loss caused by Meniere's disease, drug-induced inner ear disorders, viral inner ear disorders, purulent inner ear disorders, temporal bone fracture or acoustic nerve tumor.

34. (Currently Amended) The ~~therapeutic and/or preventive~~ method according to claim 32 wherein said sensorineural hearing loss is sudden deafness, senile deafness or noise deafness.

35. (Currently Amended) The ~~therapeutic and/or preventive~~ method according to claim 31 wherein said inner ear disorder[[s are]] is a vestibular disorder[[s]].

36. (Currently Amended) The ~~therapeutic and/or preventive~~ method according to claim 35 wherein said vestibular disorder[[s are vestibular disorders]] is caused by Meniere's disease, vestibular neuronitis or is a drug-induced inner ear disorder[[s]].

37. (Currently Amended) The ~~therapeutic and/or preventive~~ method according to claim 31 wherein said IL-6 antagonist is an antibody against an IL-6 receptor.

38. (Currently Amended) The ~~therapeutic and/or preventive~~ method according to claim 37 wherein said antibody ~~against IL-6 receptor~~ is a monoclonal antibody against an IL-6 receptor.

39. (Currently Amended) The ~~therapeutic and/or preventive~~ method according to claim 38 wherein said antibody ~~against IL-6 receptor~~ is a monoclonal antibody against a human IL-6 receptor.

40. (Currently Amended) The ~~therapeutic and/or preventive~~ method according to claim 38 wherein said antibody ~~against IL-6 receptor~~ is a monoclonal antibody against a mouse IL-6 receptor.

41. (Currently Amended) The ~~therapeutic and/or preventive~~ method according to claim 37 wherein said antibody ~~against IL-6 receptor~~ is a recombinant antibody.

42. (Currently Amended) The ~~therapeutic and/or preventive~~ method according to claim 39 wherein said monoclonal antibody ~~against human IL-6 receptor~~ is a PM-1 antibody.

43. (Currently Amended) The ~~therapeutic and/or preventive~~ method according to claim 40 wherein said monoclonal antibody ~~against mouse IL-6 receptor~~ is a MR16-1 antibody.

44. (Currently Amended) The ~~therapeutic and/or preventive~~ method according to claim 37 wherein said antibody ~~against IL-6 receptor~~ is a chimeric antibody, a humanized antibody, or a human antibody against IL-6 receptor.

45. (Currently Amended) The ~~therapeutic and/or preventive~~ method according to claim 44 wherein said humanized antibody ~~against IL-6 receptor~~ is a humanized PM-1 antibody.